

to straighten through some winter nights.  
Saving boards. Studs. Lay them all straight.  
Building a pile of seasoned lumber from  
your awkward shape. I think I have not razed  
a building only, but have built again  
that which you were when both you and I  
were young. When we both still "might have been."

In your destruction we employ those same tools  
used in your construction. The hammer that found  
these nails home now backs them out. We see now  
how the blunt head, reversed, becomes a claw.  
Dumb nails, driven without complaint, squall  
at their withdrawal. The long union of steel  
and wood has changed them both. You were built well,  
but in your destruction we reveal some weakness.  
Doorsill, retracted, brings to light the rot  
where water, trapped, corrupted board and metal both.  
Here where a floor joist touched the earth  
began slow death our surgery arrested. What's born  
again from these boards will, in turn, be tested.

-- Robert M. Chute

Naples, Maine

#### Remarkable How

these old men play checkers in the square all day  
even when it rains  
they move the game into the bandshell  
even when everything else has stopped for lunch  
they send to the drugstore for sandwiches, and say  
It's your move, Goddamnit.

even when one of them has arthritis  
and can't

they send across to the bar, for whisky.  
That'll cure you, damnit. Play.

even when the negroes march around them  
shaking posters.

What do those damn posters say?

Same old horseshit.

Some folks never satisfied. Anyway.

Got you cornered, ain't I? Play.

even after assassinations  
those old men play checkers in the square all day.

-- Ruth Moon Kempher

St. Augustine, Florida